



# Department of Defense DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 5210.41

September 23, 1988

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USD(P)

SUBJECT: Security Policy for Protecting Nuclear Weapons

- References:
- (a) DoD Directive 5210.41, "Security Criteria and Standards for Protecting Nuclear Weapons," September 12, 1978 (hereby canceled)
  - (b) DoD C-5210.41-M, "Nuclear Weapon Security Manual (U)," March 1983
  - (c) [DoD 5025.1-M](#), "Directives System Procedures," April 1981
  - (d) [DoD Directive 5000.1](#), "Major and Non-Major Defense Acquisition Programs," September 1, 1987
  - (e) through (i), see enclosure 1

## 1. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

This Directive reissues and updates reference (a) to establish security policy for protecting U.S. nuclear weapons and to assign responsibilities for the promulgation of that policy. This Directive continues the authorization to issue reference (b), consistent with reference (c).

## 2. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

2.1. This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Military Departments, the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OJCS), the Unified and Specified Commands, the Defense Agencies having responsibility for the protection of nuclear weapons, and the DoD Field Activities (hereafter referred to collectively as "DoD Components").

2.2. The protection required for nuclear weapons shall be applied equally to nuclear warheads and nuclear components of a weapon, except non-nuclear limited-life components. Protection shall also be applied to the entire weapon system where the

nuclear warhead(s) and components are an integral part of the system or become part of the system for operational reasons. Non-nuclear limited-life components shall be provided protection commensurate with their security classification and sensitivity.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

Terms used in this Directive are defined in enclosure 2.

### 4. POLICY

4.1. It is DoD policy to protect nuclear weapons from loss, theft, sabotage, unauthorized use, and unauthorized or accidental damage or destruction. The policy in this Directive is provided for a peacetime environment. While adherence to prescribed security procedures during wartime may be impractical, particularly in a combat theatre, the same peacetime philosophy for protecting nuclear weapons remains in effect. However, in times of transition to war and during wartime, commanders are expected to use those resources available to them to provide security for weapons and to ensure their survivability.

4.2. Nuclear weapons require special protection because of their political and military importance, their destructive power, and the consequences of an unauthorized deliberate or inadvertent prearming, launching, firing, or detonation (conventional or nuclear). Nuclear weapons must not be subjected to adverse physical environments except when such exposure is dictated by operational requirements. The safety of the public, operating personnel and property, and the protection of weapons from capture, theft, damage, and unauthorized use or loss are of paramount importance during all phases of operations involving nuclear weapons.

4.3. Positive measures shall be taken to ensure the complete physical control of nuclear weapons during all phases of their life cycle. To ensure a balanced security system, physical security procedures, forces, and facilities must be combined. Survivability must be a significant consideration in the design of a security system. In providing protection for nuclear weapons, accurate assessments must be made of all relevant factors including:

4.3.1. Their location.

4.3.2. The configuration in which they are maintained.

4.3.3. The nature and capabilities of potentially hostile forces.

4.3.4. The reliability and capabilities of personnel responsible for working with or protecting them.

4.4. Security shall be considered early during the research, development, and acquisition of nuclear weapon systems and the modernization and updating of existing systems. DoD Components participating in the acquisition and development process shall provide a security concept of operations for new or modernized systems to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) for approval before the Milestone II/Full-Scale Development decision described in DoD Directive 5000.1 (reference (d)) and DoD Instruction 5000.2 (reference (e)).

4.5. Physical security requirements have a major impact on the affordability and life-cycle costs of a nuclear weapon system. Similarly, modernization or product improvement efforts on existing systems must include reevaluation of system security provisions early in the process to assess the utility of new technology and to determine changing security requirements because of changes in deployment mode, location of the systems, or other factors.

4.6. Whenever there is an indication of an increased threat in an area where nuclear weapons are located, security measures appropriate to the threat shall be taken to ensure adequate protection.

4.7. Access to nuclear weapons shall be restricted to authorized persons, and the number of persons afforded such access shall be kept to a minimum and controlled by two-person policy measures described in enclosure 3.

4.8. Minimum security criteria and standards for protecting nuclear weapons are prescribed in DoD C-5210.41-M (reference (b)).

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (DUSD(P)), in coordination with the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy), shall:

5.1.1. Be responsible for overall policy guidance and establish minimum security standards and procedures for protecting nuclear weapons.

5.1.2. Conduct management oversight visits to assess the adequacy of nuclear weapon security programs and standards.

5.2. The DoD Physical Security Review Board shall advise and assist the DUSD(P) on matters involving the security of nuclear weapons.

5.3. The Director, Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) shall coordinate the publication and updating of DoD C-5210.41-M (reference (b)) with appropriate DoD Components, consistent with DoD 5025.1-M (reference (c)). Proposed changes, consistent with DoD Directive 5100.76 (reference (f)), and the DoD Components comments and recommendations shall be forwarded to the DUSD(P).

5.4. This Directive does not abrogate or abridge the authority or responsibility of a commander to apply different, equal, or more stringent criteria and standards during emergencies. Such a change in standards does not abrogate the requirement for maintaining U.S. custody of nuclear weapons and components.

## 6. PROCEDURES

Concepts and procedures for the protection of nuclear weapons are described in enclosure 3 and are prescribed in detail in DoD C-5210.41-M (reference (b)).

## 7. EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Directive is effective immediately. Forward one copy of implementing documents to the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy within 120 days, and forward one copy of changes to implementing documents within 60 days of publication.



William H. Taft, IV  
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Enclosures - 3

- E1. References, continued
- E2. Definitions
- E3. Concepts for Protecting Nuclear Weapons

E1. ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES, continued

- (e) [DoD Instruction 5000.2](#), "Major Acquisition Program Procedures," September 1, 1987
- (f) [DoD Directive 5100.76](#), "Physical Security Review Board," February 10, 1981
- (g) Section 797 of title 50, United States Code (Section 21 of the Internal Security Act of 1950)
- (h) [DoD Directive 5210.42](#), "Nuclear Weapon Personnel Reliability Program," December 6, 1985
- (i) [DoD Directive 3150.2](#), "Safety Studies and Reviews of Nuclear Weapon Systems," February 8, 1984

## E2. ENCLOSURE 2

### DEFINITIONS

E2.1.1. Access. Close physical proximity to a nuclear weapon in such a manner as to allow the opportunity to tamper with or damage it. For example, a person would not be considered to have access if an escort or guard were provided for either the person or the weapon when the person is in close proximity to the weapon. Furthermore, although an individual possessing a direct-fire, stand-off weapon may be viewed as a threat, such an individual is not considered to have access.

E2.1.2. Delay. The effect achieved by physical features, technical devices, or security measures and forces that impedes an adversary from gaining access to a nuclear weapon. Normally expressed as a function of time, it is a major consideration in the design and development of nuclear weapon security systems.

E2.1.3. Exclusion Area. A designated area immediately surrounding one or more nuclear weapons. Normally, the boundaries of an Exclusion Area are the walls, floors, and ceilings of a structure or are delineated by a permanent or temporary barrier. In the absence of positive preventative measures, access to the Exclusion Area constitutes access to the nuclear weapon.

E2.1.4. Limited Area. A designated area immediately surrounding one or more Exclusion Area(s); normally, this is between the boundaries of Exclusion Area(s) and the outer or inner barrier or boundary of the perimeter security system.

E2.1.5. Postulated Threat. An estimate of the potential adversary types, acts, capabilities, and combinations thereof that could constitute a risk to a facility or asset. A postulated threat is necessary when a specific threat cannot be determined or when an existing threat may change or grow during the projected life cycle of an asset or system faster than security improvements can be developed and implemented. The postulated threat allows for the consideration of future growth in adversary capabilities and is used as the basis for the design of security systems, equipment, and facilities.

### E3. ENCLOSURE 3

#### CONCEPTS FOR PROTECTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

E3.1.1. General. The concepts provided herein complement policy and are used for designing and implementing security criteria and standards.

E3.1.1.1. In planning the security system for nuclear weapons, priority of efforts and resources shall be given to the protection of nuclear weapons themselves. Additional security shall be commensurate with the threat to or vulnerability of the weapons, space limitations, and environmental factors.

E3.1.1.2. All Exclusion Areas and Limited Areas shall be designated and conspicuously posted as restricted areas under Section 21 of the Internal Security Act of 1950 (reference (g)).

#### E3.1.2. Selection and Use of Personnel

E3.1.2.1. Personnel associated with and directly influencing the security of nuclear weapons can be classified as command and supervisory, operational, security, support, and maintenance. Individuals must only be selected for these positions after extensive screening. The personnel screening and selection process, as well as the requirement for a continuing evaluation by supervisors and co-workers, is detailed in DoD Directive 5210.42 (reference (h)). Finally, strict application of the two-person policy ensures that no lone individual ever has access to nuclear weapons.

E3.1.2.2. The screening process used in the Personnel Reliability Program (PRP) ensures that all individuals are certified proficient in their position by a qualified person. Certification may occur after completion of a formal course of instruction or experience gained by on-the-job training.

E3.1.2.3. All personnel having access to nuclear weapons shall have a security clearance commensurate with the level of classification of materials to which they may have access.

#### E3.1.3. Two-Person Policy

E3.1.3.1. No lone individual shall have access to a nuclear weapon. During any operation that may require access to nuclear weapons, there shall be present a minimum of two authorized persons, each capable of detecting incorrect or unauthorized procedures with respect to the task to be performed and familiar with applicable safety

and security requirements. Two authorized personnel shall be physically positioned where they can detect incorrect or unauthorized procedures with respect to the task or operation being performed.

E3.1.3.2. When application of the two-person policy is required, it shall be enforced by the persons who constitute the team during the entire period they are accomplishing the task or operation assigned and until they leave the area within which the two-person policy is required.

E3.1.3.3. Security procedures and equipment, intrusion detection systems, and security force personnel shall ensure positive identification and control of all persons entering Limited and Exclusion Areas. Entry control procedures shall ensure no lone individual is permitted in an Exclusion Area or to have access to a nuclear weapon.

E3.1.3.4. The only exceptions to the two-person policy shall be those specifically prescribed in approved nuclear weapon systems safety rules established in accordance with DoD Directive 3150.2 (reference (i)).

#### E3.1.4. Security System Concepts

E3.1.4.1. Security for nuclear weapons is provided by in-depth systems that provide deterrence, detection, delay, and denial of individuals who are not authorized access to a nuclear weapon. These same systems may provide protection from damage attempts including stand-off attacks. Security systems are designed in response to actual validated threats or postulated threats that may arise as adversary intentions develop.

E3.1.4.2. Detection must be accomplished through physical or electronic measures that detect possible threats to nuclear weapons at the earliest possible point when an attempt or the preparation for an attempt to penetrate the system is being made. Delay shall consist of active and/or passive security measures using either equipment or personnel, or a combination of both, to inhibit intruders from reaching their objective. Denial is the ultimate goal of delay and is the nullifying, repulsing, or termination of an attack. Essential to the proper operation of security systems are:

E3.1.4.2.1. Assessment measures to determine the size and intention of an unauthorized intrusion.

E3.1.4.2.2. Response by security forces specifically designated and trained for countering intruders.



E3.1.4.2.3. Diverse and redundant communications to ensure command and control.

E3.1.4.3. The efficient installation and operation of the security system, including the training and exercising of response forces, shall be sufficiently imposing to deter potential attacks. Deterrence is the first line of defense, but is only effective when supported by an active, operational security system. Consequently, security forces shall be trained as they would be expected to be employed. Such training shall include, as a minimum, use of individual and crew-served weapons, small unit tactics, and annual force-on-force exercises.

E3.1.4.4. This Directive does not constitute authority for the use of unmanned, automated, deadly force to protect nuclear weapons.